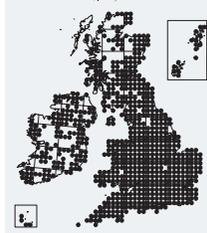


*Tortula truncata**Pottia truncata*

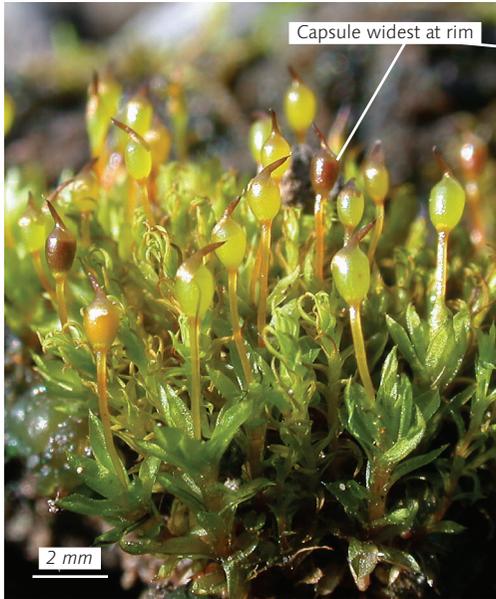
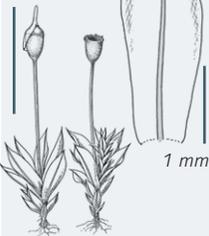
Common Pottia

Key 262



Nerve projecting  
just beyond  
leaf tip

4 mm



## Identification

This is one of the first (and commonest) mosses that beginners will find in areas of acidic soils. Shoots are clustered or scattered; most are 3–5 mm tall, but some may be much smaller. The broadly oblong leaves are about 2 mm long and widest above the middle, with plane margins and the nerve projecting just beyond the tip. The short (up to 1 mm long) capsules are hardly any longer than wide, typically widest at the rim, and abundant, especially between autumn and spring. They have an obliquely elongated lid, lack a peristome and are borne on a yellowish seta 2–3.5 mm long.

## Similar species

*T. modica* (p. 483) may also have capsules widest at the rim, but they are longer than wide, and it is a taller moss (shoots up to 1.5 cm). The shoots of *T. lanceola* (p. 481) are much the same size as *T. truncata*, but its capsules have a peristome. In addition, both *T. modica* and *T. lanceola* usually have leaves with recurved margins. *Pottia davalliana* and *P. starkeana* (p. 487) have smaller shoots (up to 3 mm tall) and leaves (about 1 mm long), the capsules have a bluntly conical lid, and plants tend to be brown. *Pottiopsis caespitosa* (p. 437) is typically smaller (slightly more than 1 mm tall), and its capsules narrow at the rim. *Henediella* species (pp. 490–491) may look similar, but the leaves are toothed near the tip. The leaves of *Leptophascum leptophylla* (p. 493) are often brownish-green, and have a reflexed tip. *Physcomitrium sphaericum* (p. 566) has larger leaf cells (visible with a hand lens), and capsules with a shortly pointed lid. Non-fertile *T. truncata* might also be confused with *Aphanorrehgma patens* (p. 567), but *A. patens* has more translucent leaves.

## Habitat

*T. truncata* grows on bare, acidic soil in the lowlands, for example in gardens, on stubble in arable fields, in pastures and woodland rides, beside roads and tracks, in quarries, sand pits and gravel pits. It will also grow on damp tarmac, but does not occur on humus, peat or calcareous soil.

Photos David Holyoak (left) & Des Callaghan (right) Drawings Sean Edwards Text Mark Lawley